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AUTHOR Lakshmanan, Usha
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ABSTRACT

This work examines the developing second language (L2) grammar of a 4-year-old girl who was a native speaker of Spanish and who acquired English as an L2. The evidence suggests that, in contrast to some recent proposals for child first-language acquisition, in the case of child L2 acquisition, nonthematic properties such as Case and INFL systems appear to be operative from the beginning. Three types of evidence are presented. One piece of evidence relates to the early emergence of the copula. A second piece of evidence concerns verbless utterances containing "for." It is proposed that there is an implicit verb in these utterances and that Case theoretic reasons force movement of the post-verbal object to a pre-verbal position. In this position, the object is assigned Case by "for," which is held to be in INFL. A third piece of evidence concerns complement clauses of "want." Although the subject has difficulties in determining that "want" is an Exceptional Case Marking verb, the data suggest that she knows and obeys the Case filter. Extensive notes are appended; contains 45 references. (Author/JP)

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"The Boy for the Cookie:" Some Evidence for the Non-violation of the Case Filter in Child Second Language Acquisition

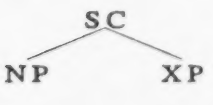
Usha Lakshmanan

This paper examines the developing L2 grammar of Marta, a four-year-old native speaker of Spanish who acquired English as an L2. The evidence suggests that, in contrast to some recent proposals for child L1 acquisition, in the case of child L2 acquisition, non-thematic properties such as Case and INFL systems appear to be operative from the very beginning. Three types of evidence are presented. One piece of evidence relates to the early emergence of the copula. A second piece of evidence concerns verbless utterances containing *for*. I propose that there is an implicit verb in these utterances and that Case theoretic reasons force movement of the post-verbal object to a pre-verbal position. In this position, the object is assigned Case by *for*, which I propose is in INFL. A third piece of evidence concerns complement clauses of *want*. Although Marta has considerable difficulties in figuring out that *want* is an Exceptional Case Marking verb, the data suggest that she knows and obeys the Case filter.

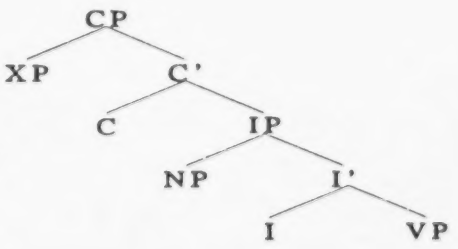
1. Introduction

Recently, Radford (1990) has proposed that early L1 grammars are characterized by an initial lexical/thematic stage, where functional categories are absent and non-thematic properties are non-operative. Lebeaux (1988/1989) has also claimed that the primitives of theta theory are analytically prior to non-thematic primitives such as Case theory.[1] Radford (1990) examined a large corpus of data from English speaking children and argued that early child clauses are like adult small clauses in that they lack an I (Inflectional) system. In other words, Radford proposes that the structure of early child clauses is as in (1a) rather than (1b), which represents the structure of ordinary adult clauses.

(1a)



(1b)



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One type of evidence that Radford cites in support of this view is the omission of the copula in clauses where these would be required in the adult grammar as in (2).

(2)
Geraint naughty.
Lisa naughty.
Hand cold.
Sausage bit hot.
Mouse in window.
It in bag.
(Radford, 1990, pp. 156–157)

Another type of evidence concerns the infinitival complements of the verb *want*. The infinitival particle *to* occupies the I (INFL) position in adult untensed clauses. However, the infinitival particle is rarely present in early grammars. This appears to be the case not only when there is a lexical subject in the infinitival complement clause of *want* as in (3a) but also in those cases where the infinitival complement does not contain a lexical subject as in (3b).

(3a)
Want [teddy drink].
Want [lady open it].
Jem want [mummy take it out].
Want [mummy do].
(Radford, 1990, pp. 140–141)

(3b)
Want [do it].
Want [read].
Want [find bike].
Want [drive car].

Radford further argues that the Case system is not operative in the early grammars of English. Specifically, he suggests that young children appear not to know the Case Filter requirement (in 4) that all lexical NPs must be assigned abstract Case:

(4)
Every phonetically realized NP must be assigned (abstract) Case. (Chomsky, 1986b, p. 74)

One piece of evidence that he adduces in support of this argument is the existence of binominal expressions as in (5). Such binominal expressions, where the verb is absent, have been previously reported in the literature by Brown (1973), Bowerman (1973), and L. Bloom (1970). Radford analyzes such binominal expressions as VP small clauses. He assumes that there is an underlying or an implicit V; however, since V is not lexicalized, and there is no proper antecedent for it, the problem is that no Case is assigned to the intended object NPs.

(5a)
Wayne coat.
Ashley door.
Gerry beans.
Roland sweet.
(Radford, 1990, p. 193)

(5b)
Kendall bath.
Kendall shower.
Kendall book.
Kendall spider.
(Bowerman, 1973, p. 241)

Another piece of evidence for the non-operation of the Case Filter concerns children's frequent use of bare NPs as complements of intransitive verbs as in (6). Since intransitive verbs cannot assign Case to the NP complements, the NPs are Caseless.[2]

(6)
Wayne go river.
Go school. Gone school.
Walk rain.
Going the slide.
(Radford, 1990)

In this paper, I produce evidence which suggests that, in the case of children acquiring a second language in a successive L2 situation, functional/non-thematic properties such as the I-system and the Case system are operative from the very beginning. Specifically, I will argue that child L2 learners do not regress to an earlier stage that has been claimed to exist for child L1 learners, a stage where lexical/thematic properties are present but not functional/non-thematic ones.[3] On the contrary, the evidence indicates that in the case of the child L2 learner, at whatever stage in L1 acquisition principles of Universal Grammar (UG) mature or become operative, at the same time, these principles will be available for L2 acquisition as well.

In support of the above claims, I will examine evidence from the interlanguage (IL) of Marta, a four-year-old native speaker of Spanish who was acquiring English as an L2 in the United States. Data on Marta were first reported in Cancino (1977), Cancino, Rosansky, and Schumann (1974), Cazden, Cancino, Rosansky, and Schumann (1975), and more recently in Lakshmanan (1989/1990, 1991a). The data from Marta consist of a total of fifteen samples. Samples were collected regularly once every two weeks over a period of eight months (for details regarding the data collection, see Cazden et al., 1975).

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, I will provide evidence for the presence of the I node in Marta's early L2 grammar. In section 3, I will examine verbless utterances in this subject's early IL and I will argue that *for* in these verbless utterances assigns Case to the NP objects. In section 4, I will examine the status of *for* in Marta's verbless utterances and I will provide evidence that suggests that *for* is in I position. I will also argue that there is an implicit verb in

the verbless utterances and that Case Filter considerations force movement of the NP object to a position where it can be assigned Case by *for*. In section 5, I will examine the consequences of an NP movement analysis in relation to the notions of Barrierhood, Government, the Empty Category Principle, and the Minimality Condition. I will suggest that the object NP moves from its underlying position and is adjoined to VP, in which position it can be assigned Case by *for* which is in I. Section 6 discusses the emergence of verbs in Marta's IL and the consequences of this change in her IL grammar. In section 7, I will examine infinitival complements of Exceptional Case Marking (ECM) verbs such as *want* in Marta's IL. I will show that although Marta has considerable difficulty in figuring out the ECM properties of verbs in English, her IL grammar is fully within the confines of Universal Grammar. In the concluding section, I will attempt to account for the omission of lexical verbs during the early stages of Marta's IL.

2. Copula and INFL in Child L2 Grammars

An examination of Marta's IL data suggests that the IP (inflectional phrase) constituent is present even in the early samples. In other words, the evidence indicates that the early clauses produced by this child L2 learner are not small clauses, which lack an I node and its maximal projection. On the contrary, what evidence there is suggests that it is present. One piece of evidence for the existence of an I node and the IP constituent is the presence of the copula *be* even in the earliest samples of the IL of this child L2 learner. As (7a) shows, the copula is the first verb to emerge. A second piece of evidence concerns the auxiliary *be*. In imitation tasks, even when the auxiliary *be* is contracted in the stimulus sentence, such instances of the *be* aux are rendered uncontracted by Marta as is illustrated in (7b).

(7a)
My teacher ... is Christine.
This is Big Bird.
This dress is here.
Is black.
Sesame Street is up here.
Mother is Mary Jo Fuster.

(7b)
Native Speaker: Mother's cooking supper.
Marta: Mother is cooking supper.
NS: Where's the baby sleeping?
M: Where is the baby sleeping?

A third piece of evidence concerns negation and inversion in questions. In negative constructions, the negative element nearly always occurs after *is* (copula/auxiliary). As Cazden et al. (1975) reported, *is* and the auxiliary *can* were the first to be negated this way. In addition, according to Cazden et al., *is* (copula/

auxiliary) was also the first to be inverted in yes/no questions and in wh-questions. In the case of wh-questions, *is* always occurred in the inverted form from the very beginning.

Thus, for this L2 learner, the copula appears to have emerged very early—much earlier than has been reported for L1 English-speaking children (see Cancino, 1977). The early emergence of the copula does not appear to be a peculiarity of Marta's IL alone and has been observed for other child L2 learners as well (Dulay & Burt, 1974; Felix, 1978; Hakuta, 1975; Nicholas, 1981; Tiphine, 1983; Wong Fillmore, 1976/1977; and others).[4] The copula appears to function like a place holder perhaps for the contents of INFL.[5,6]

A fourth piece of evidence concerns the infinitival complements of the verb *want*. As we saw in section 1, in the early grammars of English-speaking children, the infinitival particle *to* (which occupies the I position in adult untensed clauses) is rarely present. In contrast, in the case of this child L2 learner, the infinitival particle *to* is rarely absent in utterances where the subject of the infinitival complement of *want* is PRO (i.e., not a lexical subject). As a detailed discussion of the complement clauses of *want* in Marta's IL is presented in section 7, I will not further discuss this evidence in this section.

The copula is also occasionally used in structures which would require a lexical transitive verb. What is interesting is that the lexical verb is absent but the copula is present as is shown in (8). Similar uses of the copula have also been noted by previous researchers (Felix, 1978; Tiphine, 1983; Wong Fillmore, 1976/1977). A question that may be posed of such utterances, is: How do the intended NP objects get Case (assuming that the copula in such structures has no Case to assign to the object NPs)?[7]

(8)
Christine is the class. 'Christine teaches the class'
This lady is ... this egg. 'This lady is buying eggs'
The girl is the cookie. 'The girl is eating a cookie'
The boy is tambor = 'drum.' *Pantomimes drumming.*
This girl is the shoes. 'This girl is putting on her shoes'

3. Verbless Utterances and the Case Filter

Utterances such as (8) are extremely rare in Marta's IL. In the earliest samples, at the same time as utterances such as (8) occur lexical verbs other than the copula are nearly always absent. However, we do not find the type of binominal expressions that have been reported for L1 English-speaking children (see 5). Instead, we find Marta producing a curious construction using the preposition *for*. Such utterances first appear in Samples 1 and 2 in spontaneous conversation. These are shown in (9).

(9)
Carolina is for English and Espagnol. *'Carolina speaks English and Spanish.'*
Ah ... for the baby. *In response to: What are you doing?*
For Hello. *'Say hello.'*
For the lamp. *In response to: What did I do? (said while turning the light off and on.)*
For you. Or for mommy. *In response to: What do you hear?*
For the head the little girl. *In response to: What's cookie monster going to do?*
I going for, for little chair. *'I'm going to get a little chair.'*
For /pain/ (Sp for 'comb' (n.)). *In response to: What are you doing to the doll?*

In sample (2) such *for* constructions also appear in the context of a picture description task. These are provided in (10).

(10)
This is the boy for the cookies. *Picture of boy eating cookies.*
This is the girl for *(shakes her hands)* tamboron. *Picture of girl playing the tambourine.*
This is the girl for the baby. *Picture of girl giving a baby/doll a bottle.*
This is the girl and the boy for panderetta = 'tambourine.'
This is the boy for the milk. *Picture of boy pouring milk into a glass.*
This is the girl for the cookie. *NS asks: What is she doing with it? M pantomimes eating it.*
This is the boy for beans = 'beads.' *Picture of boy stringing beads.*
This is the girl and the boy for the blocks. *NS: What are they making? M responds:* For the house. For this house.
This is the girl for the bot. *Picture of girl putting on boots.*
This is the boy for the apartment. *Boy making a tall building.*
This is the girl for the sweater. *Girl putting on her sweater.*
For the shoes. This girl is the shoes. *Girl putting on her shoes.*

What we notice about utterances as in (9) and (10) is that transitive verbs are absent and at the same time the preposition *for* precedes the intended object NP. What is the function of *for* in such structures? *For* appears to be semantically empty—it is not used to express a benefactive meaning. Rather, it appears to serve a syntactic function—that of a Case assigner. In other words, *for* may be said to assign Case to the object NP. Data such as (9) and (10) suggest that this child L2 learner knows and obeys the Case Filter requirement given in (4).[8]

4. NP Movement and the Status of *for*

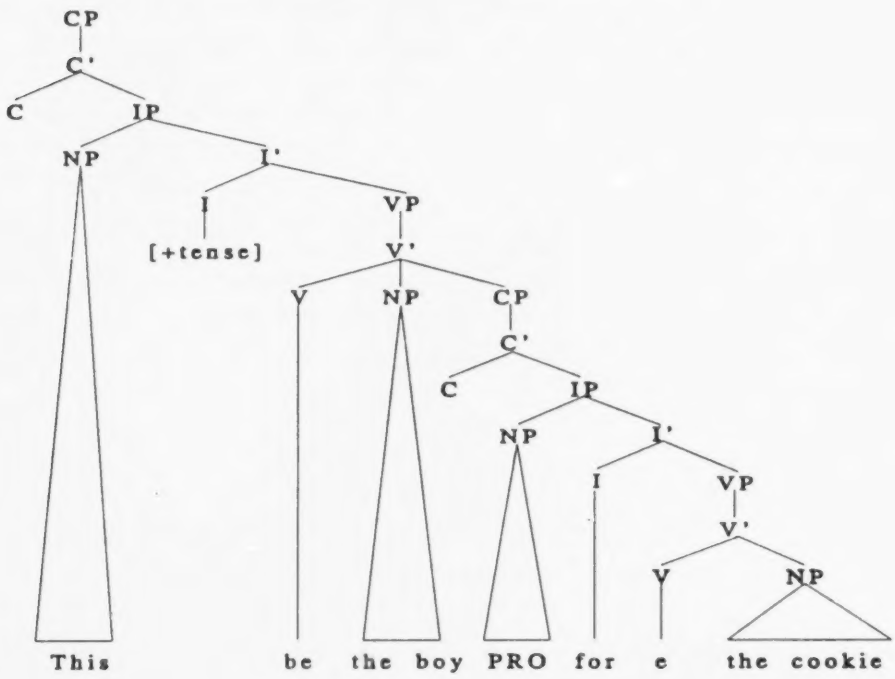
Let us assume that *for* has a syntactic function to fulfil in that it assigns Case to the object NP. Other interesting questions become readily apparent and need to be answered. Is *for* only a Case assigner in such constructions? What is the structure of such *for* utterances? In what follows I will argue that *for* in verbless

utterances as in (9) and (10) is not merely a Case assigner. Specifically, I will argue that *for* occupies the I position (in other words *for* occupies the position occupied by the infinitival particle *to* in adult infinitival clauses) and that the structure of the *for* utterances is possibly as in (11c) rather than (11a) or (11b).[9,10]

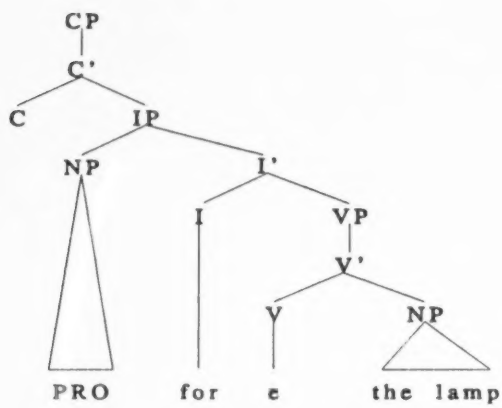
(11)
a. [$_{PP}$ [$_{NP}$ the boy] [$_{PP}$ for the cookie]]
b. [$_{VP}$ V for the cookie]
c. [$_{IP}$ PRO for [$_{VP}$ V the cookie]]

According to (11a) the structure of the *for* utterance is a PP small clause. On the other hand, (11b) and (11c) state that there is an underlying/implicit Verb. According to (11b) the underlying verb precedes *for*. In other words, (11b) suggests that the *for* utterance is a case of transfer from Spanish, since certain verbs in Spanish take a preposition when the object NP is a person. The structure shown in (11c) suggests that there is an IP constituent, and that *for* occupies the position occupied by the infinitival particle *to* (in other words, *for* is probably in I position). Assuming (11c), the full underlying structure of the verbless utterances in (10) such as *this is the boy for the cookie* is as in (11d), and the full structure of the verbless utterances in (9) such as *for the mommy* (= 'I hear mommy') or *for the lamp* (= 'you're turning the light off and on') is as in (11e).[11]

(11d)



(11e)



In the remaining part of this section, I will argue in favor of a movement analysis according to which the object NP moves from its underlying position to a position where it is adjacent to *for* so that it can be assigned Case by it (since an implicit verb lacking a proper antecedent cannot assign Case). The movement of the object NP (as in the case of the English passive construction) is necessitated in order to avoid a violation of the Case Filter principle. Before presenting a discussion of the movement analysis, I would like to turn briefly to other constructions where *for* is used at the same time as in verbless utterances.

In samples 1 and 2, for example, we notice that *for* is used in possessive constructions as in (12). It may be mentioned here that the genitive case marker *'s* is absent during this stage.

(12)
For Hymie Juan. 'Hymie's belt.'
This is for me. 'This is mine.'
This bow is for the Jaimie. 'This ball is Jaimie's.'
This water is for me. 'This is my glass of water.'
This is for him. *In response to: Whose house is this?*
This is for him. *In response to: Whose sandwich is that?*

At the same time, *for* is also used instead of other prepositions such as *of* as in (13), and *to* as in (14a) and (14b). In fact, *for* appears to be the only preposition that is used during the early stages of this L2 learner's interlanguage.

(13)
This picture is for the mother or the father or the boys and girl. 'This is a picture of the mother and the father...'
Dis picture is for the train. 'This is a picture of a train.'
This is for airplane. 'This is a picture of an airplane.'
I be more picture for me here. 'I have more pictures of myself here.'

Picture for my Barbie. 'This is a picture of my Barbie.'
This here for the little girl. 'This is a picture of a little girl.'
And the book for Sesame Street. 'This is a book on/about Sesame Street.'

(14a)
NS: Did your Daddy go out?
M: Yeah.
NS: Where did he go?
M: For the school. For the school.

(14b)
NS: Where are you going?
M: For /hour/. *(goes out of the room and returns with cookies)*

During the later stages of this learner's interlanguage, such uses of *for* also occur, as shown in (14c), although such occurrences are not frequent.

(14c)
M: I've a book and I want to read it for you. (S12)
M: I could read it for you in English. (S13)

The evidence cited thus far suggests that *for* is a general Case assigner, which in turn may be taken as evidence against the claim that the structure of the *for* utterance in verbless constructions is as in (11c). However, although *for* is used instead of other prepositions, it is also used instead of the infinitival particle *to*. Direct evidence for this comes primarily from the later samples where we find leftovers of such uses of *for* persisting as the data in (15a) indicate. It may be mentioned here that at the same time as such uses of *for* occur, utterances with the infinitival particle *to* are also present.

(15a)
Going for eat. (S3)
Is for eat. (S3)
I take a cup. I take a glass. This glass xxx [fink/think] I put in thing for eat ... (S6)
This for eating now. She's eating a cereal. (S6)
First I need ... flou ... a big p- down a big thing for put it over ... (S7)
You know my mommy will get me one of that doll for get—one of that doll for take me home. (S9)
Come here for see the crocodiles. (S9)
I'll call h- my mamma will call you for come to play in in my c- house. (S10)
Can keep on the earth all the stars for put it in the head of the monsters. (S10)
What you want for eat? (S11)
Here you have something more for hide. *Gives NS pajamas to hide from the witch cook.* (S11)
For make cakes. You have to tell me. (S12)
And what you use for make a circle? (S12)

You can stay for play on the back part of my apartment. (S12)
For going up the airplane. (S13)
For take it to the airport. (S13).
C'mon Rubi. You're ready for see the show. (S13)

In addition, in samples (2) and (4) we find the infinitival particle *to* used in constructions of the type in (15b).[12]

(15b)
This girl is to wash your hand and wash your feet. (S2)
Be to pull the baby. (S2)
I go to- to- to- the cookie for me (S4)

Then there is one crucial bit of evidence in sample 2 which is presented in (16).

(16)
This is the boy for the cookie eat. (S2)
For the cookie eat. (S2)

What is interesting about the data in (16) is that *for* is present and at the same time the verb—in this case *eat*—is overtly realized. However, the word order of the verb and the object does not (on the surface, at least) resemble the target word order since the object, *the cookie*, precedes the verb. It is important to note that there are only two such occurrences in the whole data and word order errors as in (16) are not productive. These are crucial data for several reasons. First, they suggest that there may indeed be an implicit V in the verbless *for* utterances given in (9) and (10). Second, they suggest that the structure of the *for* utterance is not V *for* NP but *for* V NP (i.e., the structure is not as in 11b but as in 11c). Third, they suggest that the Case Filter is at work which forces the movement of the NP object to the position preceding the implicit V. Fourth, they suggest that *for* (which I claim is in I position), is treating the NP as its object even though it is not. As stated earlier, utterances such as (16) do not persist. Why should this be the case? Let us assume that the object NP, *the cookie*, in (16) has moved from its underlying position following V to a position preceding V. The movement of the object NP would result in a trace which is coindexed with it, thus yielding a chain. Since V is lexical in the utterances in (16), it would assign Case to the NP trace. But the moved NP (which is the head of the chain) would also be assigned Case by *for*, which treats it as its object. Since the chain would contain more than one Case marked position, it would result in a violation of the uniqueness condition, which is believed to hold of well formed chains (see Chomsky, 1986). The uniqueness condition is given in (17).

(17)
If $C = (\alpha_1, ..., \alpha_n)$ is a maximal CHAIN, then α_n occupies its unique θ position and α_1 its unique Case-marked position. (Chomsky, 1986b, p. 137)

Let us assume that this learner knows that a chain cannot contain more than one Case-marked position and so this would account for why constructions as in (16) do not recur.[13]

5. Government, Barrierhood, and the ECP

Thus far, I have argued that there is an underlying or implicit V in the verbless *for* utterances. Since V is not lexical, and since it does not have a Proper Antecedent, it cannot assign Case to its object. Assuming that *for* (which is in I position) is a potential Case assigner, it should be able to govern the NP object within VP and assign Case to it. Along with Chomsky (1986a), I assume the following definition of government:

(18)
α governs β iff α m-commands β and there is no γ, γ a barrier for β, such that γ excludes α. (Chomsky, 1986a, p. 9)

From (18) it follows that, although *for* m-commands the NP object in VP, it can govern it only if VP is not a barrier. I assume the definition of barrier as in (19).

(19)
γ is a barrier for β iff (a) or (b):
a. γ immediately dominates δ, δ a BC for β;
b. γ is a BC for β, γ≠ IP. [Where γ is a maximal projection] (Chomsky, 1986a, p. 14)

VP is a maximal projection and from (19b) it follows that if VP is a barrier for the NP object which it dominates, it must be a blocking category. In other words, it must not be L-marked (Lexically marked), where blocking category (BC) and L-marking are defined as in (20) and (21).

(20)
γ is a BC for β iff γ is not L-marked and γ dominates β. [Where γ is a maximal projection] (Chomsky, 1986a, p.14)

(21)
α L-marks β iff α is a lexical category that θ-governs β.

I assume that VP is not L-marked. If it were L-marked, it would have to be L-marked by *for* which is in I position. However, in order for *for* to L-mark VP, it would have to θ-govern it, where θ-government is defined as in (22).

(22)
α θ-governs β iff α is a zero-level category that θ-marks β, and α, β are sisters.

I will assume here that *for* does not θ-govern VP. Thus, VP is a barrier to government of the NP object contained in VP by *for*. It is a blocking category and it is not L-marked by *for*, which is in I position. So, as stated earlier, in order not to violate the Case Filter, the NP object moves. But what position can it move to? There appear to be at least three possibilities, presented in (23).

(23)
a. NP moves and adjoins to I (which contains *for*).
b. NP moves into Specifier (SPEC) position of VP.
c. NP adjoins to VP.

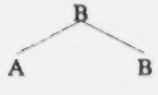
(23a) would violate some version of Emonds' Structure Preserving Condition (Emonds, 1976; Chomsky, 1986a) which may be stated as in (24).

(24)
Adjunction (or substitution) of an XP (i.e., a phrasal category) can only be to or into another XP; adjunction or substitution of an X^0 (i.e., a head), can only be to or into another X^0.

Let us assume that children know the condition in (24) and hence (23a) would be ruled out as a possibility. (23b) would be a possibility, since *for* can govern and assign Case to an NP in SPEC of VP, VP not being a barrier to government of NP in its SPEC position from outside VP (cf. Chomsky, 1986a, p. 43). But there are technical problems in assuming (23b) if we accept Koopman and Sportiche's (1988) recent proposal that the subject NP originates in the SPEC of VP where VP = VMAX. For the purpose of this paper, I am going to ignore possibility (23b) and concentrate instead on possibility (23c).

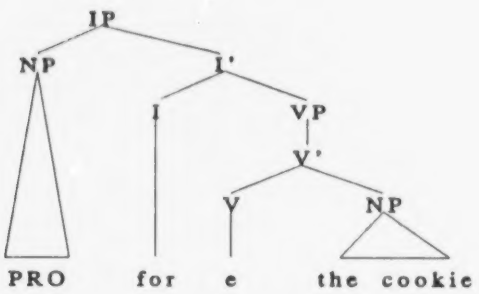
According to (23c), the NP object moves and adjoins to VP. Here, I assume along with Chomsky (1986a) and May (1985) that in a typical adjunction structure as in (25), where A is adjoined to B, A is not dominated by B. Rather B consists of two segments and A is dominated by B only if it is dominated by every segment of B. In other words, the adjoined element A is neither dominated nor not dominated by B.

(25)

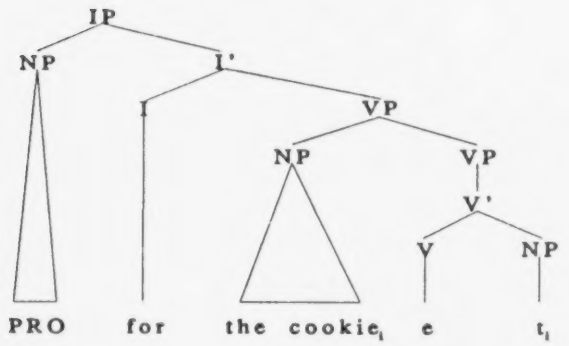


The structures of the *for* utterance before and after movement are given in (26) and (27) respectively.

(26)



(27)



The possibility given in (23c) would not violate the Structure Preserving Condition in (24). Since NP is an XP, it can adjoin to VP, which is also an XP. The movement of the NP is from an A position to an A' position. But NP movement is generally defined as movement from an A position to another A position. However, as Seely (personal communication) has observed, "an NP may move to an A' position even if that NP is not an operator (all else equal). There is no problem unless the NP moves from an A to an A' position and then on to an A position. If the NP moves and adjoins to VP and stops moving, it is fine (again all else equal)." But if the NP moves and adjoins to VP, this could lead to a possible violation of the Empty Category Principle (ECP) which is stated in (28).[14]

(28)
Every trace must be properly governed.

Proper government can be established in one of two ways as stated in (29).

(29)
α properly governs β iff α θ-governs or antecedent-governs β. (Chomsky 1986a, p. 17)

The trace resulting from the movement of the NP is governed by V but, possibly, it is not properly governed by it since V is not lexical and there is no proper antecedent for it. Although it is not properly governed by V, the trace is properly antecedent-governed by the moved NP, if we assume government in the sense of exclusion and inclusion (see 18). So there would be no ECP violation if the trace is at least properly antecedent-governed. Since the structure resulting from the movement of the NP is an adjunction structure, the NP which is adjoined to VP is not excluded by VP. For the NP to be excluded by VP, it would have to be excluded by every segment of VP. There is an additional problem posed by the Minimality Condition, given in (30).

(30)
A category γ is a barrier for β if it is the immediate projection (alternatively, a projection) of a zero-level category $\delta \neq \beta$. (Chomsky, 1986a, p. 88)

According to the Minimality Condition, since V is a closer governor, V' would be a barrier to government of the trace by the NP adjoined to VP. However, as stated earlier, V is not lexical and there is no proper antecedent for it. Therefore it cannot properly govern the trace. Possibly, the Minimality Condition is relevant only in those cases where the closer governor is a lexical head and not in those cases where the closer governor is an empty head. Since V is not lexically realized, possibly, there would not be any violation of the Minimality Condition.[15] I will assume that this is indeed the case.

Another problem concerns the relation between *for*, which is in I position, and the adjoined NP. Does *for* govern the NP adjoined to VP or does the VP still constitute a barrier to the government of NP by *for*? Since the structure resulting after movement of the object NP is an adjunction structure, the NP is neither dominated nor not dominated by VP. Therefore VP is not a barrier and *for* can govern the NP adjoined to VP. But can *for* assign Case to the NP? Since the IP is an infinitival clause, that is, I is [–tense] and *for* is the equivalent of *to*, namely an infinitival particle, it should not have any Case to assign. It is generally accepted that the infinitival particle *to* does not assign Case (nominative Case) to the subject NP, that is, the NP in the SPEC of IP. PRO (which is ungoverned) occupies the SPEC position of IP in the *for* utterances and cannot be assigned Case. The object NP occupies a position to the right of *for*. As we saw earlier, *for* is a general Case assigner in Marta's early L2 grammar: It is used in possessive constructions and is also used instead of other prepositions such as *of* and *to*. So, possibly, there is a reanalysis of *for* which is in I position. *For* is perhaps reanalyzed as a prepositional infinitival particle (cf. the use of *for* as a prepositional complementizer in the adult English grammar as in *For John to go there would be foolish*).[16]

The reanalyzed *for* treats the NP adjoined to VP as its object (even though it is not) and assigns Case to it.[17,18] The end result is that there is no violation of the Case Filter.[19,20]

6. Emergence of Lexical Verbs

In samples 6 and 10, the same picture description task as the one in sample 2 was used. The data obtained through this picture description task in sample 6 and sample 10 are displayed in (31) and (32) respectively.

(31)
Picture Description Task (S6):
He in the table put—one of this book.
And this is girl. Eating a cookie.
This is a girl. Take a doll.
She's eating a cereal.
This is a boy. *NS: What's he doing?* Put a milk in the glass.
This one doing a tambourine. Boom, boom.
He doing um a block house.
He doing, xxx he doing, um he doing put, he put he hat he hat and his coat.

(32)
Picture Description task (S10):
He's have a playfull of cookies.
He's playing a drum.
The girl and the boy ares putting her gloves.
The boy is putting his hat.
The girl and the boy is playing with /p-ing/ = 'beads.'
The boy is playing with blocks.
The girl is putting milk.
The girl have a plateful of cookies. *NS: What's she doing with them? M makes eating motions.*
Girl and boy is drinking milk.

When we compare the data in (31) and (32) with those in (10), we notice that *for* is absent, unlike in (10). Further, verbs are overtly present. Another difference concerns the subject position of the clauses in (31) and (32). In the *for* utterances, according to (11c) the subject is PRO, which can only occur in an ungoverned position. According to (11c), the *for* utterance is [–tense] and so PRO is not governed. What we find in the data in (31) and (32) is either that there is an overt lexical subject (usually a pronoun in the nominative) or that sometimes the subject is suppressed. The clauses in (31) and (32), unlike the *for* utterances, may be argued to be [+tense]. So in those cases where the subject is phonetically suppressed, the identity of the empty subject is probably *pro* (i.e., an empty category with the features +pronominal, –anaphoric) and not PRO. For in the early verbless for utterances was argued to be an infinitival particle like *to* in I position

of infinitival [–tense] clauses. Since, the clauses in (31) and (32) are [+tense], *for* would not be present in such clauses. This, rather than the fact that verbs are present, would account for why *for* does not persist in utterances such as (31) and (32). Further, as stated earlier, leftovers of the earlier stage where *for* is in I position of [–tense] clauses occur in the later stages of Marta's IL (see data in 15a).

7. Infinitival Complements and Exceptional Case Marking

Let us now turn to infinitival complements of *want* and *like* in Marta's IL. I argued earlier that in contrast to what has been proposed for L1 learners, the early clauses produced by this L2 learner are not small clauses, that is, they do not lack an IP constituent and an I node. One piece of evidence that I cited above is the presence of the copula in its uncontracted form even during the initial stages of Marta's interlanguage. Another piece of evidence concerns Marta's productions of infinitival complements of verbs such as *want* and *like*. The first occurrence of the infinitival complement of *want* occurs towards the end of sample 2 as shown in (33):

(33)
I wanta see you tomorrow.

Unlike what has been reported for child L1 learners, Marta never uses the contracted form *wanna* except for one instance. After sample 2, infinitival complements of *want* occur regularly and in nearly all cases the infinitival particle *to* is present as in (34).

(34)
I want to live at a /tee-shirt/. (S6)
You want to sing it? (S7)
Do you want-a-you sing it now? (S7)
I want to put in the piscina with my shoes off. (S7)
I want to go with you to the swimming pool. (S7)
You want to go with me? (S7)
You want to see the fish? (S7)
And then he don't want go, he don't want to. (S7)
I want to drink water. (S8)
I want to close the door. (S8)
I want to put it myself. (S8)
She don't want to play with. (S8)
What do you want to show me? (S9)
I want to get a taxi. (S8)
Want to buy one of them. (S9).
If somebody wants to paint. (S10)

Another verb which takes an infinitival complement is *like*. Even where this is concerned, the infinitival particle is always present as in (35).

(35)
Speaks English and Spanish but he likes to speak Spanish. (S8)
I'd like to buy one of that. (S9)
I like to draw too. (S9)
I like to eat all of the things of my home. (S10)
They like to play most inside and outside too. (S10)

In all of the above cases of the infinitival complements of *want* and *like*, the subject of the infinitival clause is not overtly present. The subject of the infinitival clause is PRO as in the adult grammar. What about cases where the infinitival complement contains a lexical subject? In the adult grammar, the lexical subject in such a position would not be able to get Case from I because I is [–tense]. But in addition to being control verbs (that is, they can license PRO in the subject position of their infinitival complements), *want* and *like* are Exceptional Case Marking (ECM) verbs and can therefore license a lexical NP in the subject position of the infinitival clause. In other words, they treat the lexical NP in the subject position of the infinitival complement as their object, even though it is not, and assign Case to it. The data from Marta's IL suggest that she has considerable problems figuring out that *want* and *like* are ECM verbs. During the stage when she produces utterances as in (34) and (35), Marta also produces infinitival complements of *want* and *like* with a lexical subject in the embedded clause, although such utterances are much less frequent. Marta's very first attempt to produce such an utterance is given in (36).

(36)
I go to say one thing you want to I put here in this little paper? (S7)

What is interesting to note is that the lexical subject of the embedded clause is a pronoun and it is in the nominative. In addition, *to* is present but it precedes the subject of the infinitival clause. The use of the nominative form of the pronoun suggests that the embedded clause is [+tense] and not [–tense]—that is, the embedded clause is not an infinitival clause at all. Further, (36) also suggests that *to* has been reanalyzed as a complementizer and is in COMP position (i.e., *to* here is similar to *that*).

In all other occurrences similar to (36), *to* is always absent and the lexical subject (which is a pronoun in nearly all the instances) is always in the nominative form. Further, although *to* is absent, the complementizer *that* is never overtly present.[21] The relevant examples are shown in (37).

(37)
What you want I put here? (S7)
And what you want I make you? (S7)
You want I make a "B"? (S9)
I want you see this the picture. (S10)

Want the dress get white and this color. (S11)
I don't want they go away. (S13)
Where you want I take you? (S13)
D'you want I tell you? (S14)
Because I want the other stick go in there and then come out like a magic. (S14)
I don't want Joshua no see you. (S15)
Because I don't want he, he, he just see you. (S15)
Because I don't want he hides there. (S15)
And he likes I marry him. 'He would like me to marry him' (S15)

It may be argued that perhaps Marta does not distinguish between nominative pronouns and accusative pronouns, but this would not be a valid argument as there is overwhelming evidence that at the stage when she produces utterances as in (37) she can and does maintain a distinction between nominative and accusative forms of the pronoun. What is interesting about utterances as in (36) and (37) is that although they do not match the target L2 grammar, they are fully within the confines of Universal Grammar. Marta appears to know that lexical NPs cannot occur in the subject position of [–tense] clauses.[22] Notice that we do *not* find any utterances as in (38).

(38)
*Because I don't want he to just see you.

Until the very end, Marta produces utterances as in (37). The only piece of evidence for this learner's successful acquisition of the ECM properties of *want* and *like* are the utterances given in (39). These occur in sample 15 which also happens to be the final sample:

(39)
Because I don't want him to bother us. (S15)
No you can't ... because he don't like puppets to go there when they're when he's dressing. (S15)

8. Conclusion

To conclude, we have seen that lexical verbs are absent during the initial stages of acquisition of a second language. However, although verbs are absent, I have provided evidence which suggests that non-thematic primitives such as the Case Filter are fully operative. I have also provided evidence which suggests that the IP constituent is present in early stages of child L2 grammars, in contrast to what has been proposed for L1 learners. The evidence from Marta indicates that in successive L2 acquisition (at least in the case of children), L2 learners may not

regress to a lexical/thematic stage where non-thematic properties are not operative. Rather, at whatever stage principles of UG mature or become operative for the L1, these principles will be available for L2 acquisition at the same time.

However, an important question which I have not addressed thus far is why verbs are absent. One explanation may be that in the initial stages of acquisition of a language, the learner's attention is focused more on nouns/objects rather than on verbs/actions. However, this is not a satisfactory explanation, as even a cursory glance at the early samples of the IL of Marta will show that the attention of this learner is not only on objects but on actions as well. Another explanation may be that the omission of verbs may be the result of processing limitations which serve to keep the learner's utterances relatively short.[23] But an explanation based on processing limitations would only predict that binominal expressions would occur; it would not predict the occurrence of elements such as *for* in verbless utterances in Marta's IL. A more reasonable explanation relates to the silent period that has frequently been reported in the child L2 literature. Children have often been known to go through a silent period where they do not produce utterances in the L2. A classic example is Uguisu, a five-year-old native speaker of Japanese, who is reported by Hakuta (1975) to have gone through a nearly five-month long silent period during her acquisition of English as L2. Marta, in contrast to Uguisu, did not go through a similar silent period. In fact, she is reported to have begun to produce utterances in English fairly soon after she was exposed to it (Cancino, 1977). Perhaps, then, what we can speculate about Marta is that she did go through a type of silent period, in her case one restricted to lexical verbs. Marta avoids using verbs. Perhaps she could have resorted to verbs in Spanish. However, she does not do this at all. Now why should she have avoided using verbs?

A possible answer to this question involves the notion that the verb is in some sense the nucleus of relevant information about a language. Acquiring a verb in a language involves figuring out its meaning(s), the thematic properties associated with it, its subcategorization properties, its morphological properties, such as verb endings, and so on. So a delay in the use of the target L2 verbs may in fact be advantageous to learners to the extent that it may provide them with time to analyze (at some level of consciousness) the target L2 and figure out the relevant information unfettered by their own productions.

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In addition, I would like to thank Alan Kim, Lydia White, Lise Winer, and Margaret Winters for their comments on an earlier version of this paper. Any errors are, of course, my own.

Notes

1. It must be pointed out, however, that the status of functional categories and non-thematic systems in early L1 grammars is far from being an uncontroversial issue, as there are those (Hyams, 1986, and others) who do not share Radford's or Lebeaux's views on this.

2. It may be mentioned here that following Abney (1987), Radford maintains a distinction between NPs and DPs. According to this analysis, DPs are determiner phrases that are maximal projections of the determiner head and its complement. Radford assumes that adult nominals are Case-marked DPs which have to be licensed by principles of Case theory whereas child nominals are Caseless NPs. Another piece of evidence cited by Radford for the non-operation of the Case Filter in early L1 English grammars is the absence of a determiner system.

3. Corder (1977) stated that L2 acquisition is a process of complication. Initially, according to Corder, the L2 learner regresses to a basic language which he claims also characterizes the early stages of child L1 acquisition. While Corder does not provide specific details regarding the properties of such a basic language, he suggests that the grammar of this basic language is determined by semantics and the situational context rather than syntax. From Corder's point of view, L2 acquisition is a process of increasing complication of the base.

4. J. Huang (1971) reports on the acquisition of English by Paul, a five-year-old Chinese child. During the early stages, Paul produced a number of constructions where the copula would be required (specifically, structures of the *this is X* type) but, in contrast to Marta (and other child L2 learners), Paul usually omitted the copula. However, Huang also reports that Paul usually maintained a pause between *this* and the following element (usually a noun). Possibly, in this child's early grammar the pause functions similarly to the copula in Marta's IL, namely, as a place holder for the contents of I.

5. It may be noted here that there appear to be two possibilities with respect to how the copula is generated in this learner's IL. One possibility is that it is base generated in I position. Another possibility is that it is generated under VP and that it subsequently moves to I position.

6. Lydia White (personal communication) has pointed out that the presence of the copula in utterances produced by Marta during the early stages of her IL is also evidence that the Case Filter is operative, in that the copula allows nominative Case to be assigned to the subject in such sentences.

7. It is possible that some of the occurrences of *is* in the utterances given in (8) are instances of the auxiliary and not the copula *be*. However, regardless of whether *is* in these utterances is a copula or an auxiliary, the essential point is that the I node appears to be present in this subject's early IL.

8. It is relevant to mention here that the definite article is usually present even during the early stages of Marta's IL when verbs are absent. As Cancino (1977) has observed, the definite article emerges much earlier in Marta's IL in contrast to what has been observed for L1 English-speaking children. Assuming Abney's (1987) analysis (see Note 2), the NP objects in Marta's *for* utterances may be regarded as Case-marked DPs (determiner phrases).

9. Lydia White (personal communication) has suggested that assuming more fully articulated tree structure proposals such as those in Pollock (1989) and Chomsky (1989), the possibility of locating *for* in a category such as AGR-O needs to be explored. Pollock (1989) has proposed that the INFL node should be split into three different categories, AGR (agreement), T (tense), and NEG (negation), with each category heading its own maximal projection. Following Pollock, Chomsky (1989) assumes that there is an AGR category and its maximal projection situated between NEG and VP. However, Pollock and Chomsky differ as to what type of AGR it is. Pollock considers it Subject-AGR (AGR-S) while Chomsky argues that it is Object-AGR (AGR-O). According to Chomsky, AGR-S is base generated as the topmost node of the clause structure, that is preceding T (F(inite) in his terminology).

It is not clear to me at present whether an analysis which locates *for* in AGR-O can be supported or not. The possibility of locating *for* in a category such as AGR-O will depend on what we assume to be the null hypothesis that the child starts out with. If the null hypothesis is that all languages are maximally alike, then we would expect that even in a language such as English, which does not have overt marking for object agreement, AGR-O along with its maximal projection would be present. Under the null hypothesis, perhaps it may be possible to locate *for* in AGR-O. However, if we assume a weaker hypothesis, which is that languages vary with respect to the functional categories that they instantiate, then positive evidence for the existence of the category AGR-O will have to be encountered first. Recently, Iatridou (1990), who assumes the weaker hypothesis, has argued that in English (and perhaps also in French) there is no AGR category and its maximal projection situated between NEG and VP. Assuming that Iatridou is correct, it would be difficult to locate *for* in AGR-O since evidence for AGR-O will not be encountered in English. Possibly, then, *for* (like the infinitival particle *to*) would be base generated in T(ense), i.e., [–finite] tense.

10. It is interesting to note that in Belfast English (see Henry, 1987 cited in Borer, 1989), *for* can be cliticized to the infinitival particle *to* in post-subject position (i.e., I position) as is illustrated below.

(i)
John seems for to be happy.
John isn't likely for to win.
I wanted John for to win.
I don't know how for to do that.

11. It may be noted here that while PRO in sentences such as [This is the boy [PRO for the cookie]] is an instance of obligatory (Object-) Controlled PRO, PRO in sentences such as, for example, [PRO for the lamp] and [PRO for the mommy] is not an instance of obligatory control. Nor does PRO in the latter sentences have an arbitrary interpretation in the context. Rather, it appears to have a discourse reference. As Bresnan (1982) has shown, PRO in adult English grammars can refer to elements in the discourse. In (i) (which is Bresnan's 36c), for example, PRO, which is the subject of the embedded clause *what to do* can only be interpreted as referring to *Mary*.

(i)
Mary sighed and looked around the room. It was unclear what PRO to do with herself now that Molly was gone.

From an acquisition point of view, it may be hypothesized that arbitrary control PRO is acquired at a later stage.

12. It must be mentioned here that in the original transcripts of Marta's IL, the utterance shown in (15b), *This girl is to wash your hand,* is presented as *This girl is the wash your hand.* Fortunately, the audiotape recordings were available and on verification it is clear that the utterance shown in (15b) is the correct one.

13. Daniel Seely (personal communication) points out that the sentences in (16) pose a problem for the movement analysis. Since a lexical verb (*eat*, in this case) is present, we would not expect the object NP to move in the first place. I agree that the data in (16) do make the movement analysis proposed here problematic. While I do not at present have any explanation that would fully account for why there is movement of the object NP in (16), one possibility, is that *eat* is analyzed by Marta as an unaccusative verb. Belletti (1988) has argued that unaccusative verbs do not assign accusative Case (which is the characteristic Case of objects) to their selected D-structure objects. Based on evidence from languages with a morphologically rich Case system, Belletti argues that accusative is not the only Case with which an object can be marked. In Finnish, for example, a transitive verb such as *pani* 'put' (depending on its interpretation), can assign either accusative or the partitive Case to its object. Further, if accusative Case is assigned, the object has a definite reading; if the partitive Case is assigned, the object has an indefinite reading. In addition, it appears that a definite NP can be assigned only accusative Case and not partitive Case. Given the fact that nearly all the objects produced by Marta during the early stage are definite NPs (see Note 8), it is possible that movement of the object NP *the cookies* in (16) is necessitated because the verb *eat* has a reading associated with that of an unaccusative verb and thus cannot assign accusative Case to its object.

14. I am grateful to Daniel Seely for bringing this to my attention.

15. See Borsley (1989, pp. 128–129) for a similar view that categories with empty heads do not count as barriers to government.

16. It is interesting to note that historically, the infinitival particle *to* derived from the preposition to (see Jespersen, 1965).

17. Lakshmanan (1991a) also reports on verbless utterances in the early IL of Cheo, a five-year-old native speaker of Spanish who acquired English as a second language in the U.S. Although *for* does not occur in the verbless utterances produced by Cheo, the data suggest that this learner also observes the Case Filter. Specifically, this learner does not produce binominal expressions. Instead, he uses two main devices in verbless utterances. One device is to use the preposition *with* (e.g., *the boy with the milk*—picture of a boy pouring milk into a glass). A second device is to use a coordinated construction (e.g., *the boy and the cookie*). If one assumes that *and* and *with* are Case assigners, then the evidence from Marta and Cheo suggest that individual differences among child L2 learners may at best be superficial and that the same abstract principles (in this instance, the Case Filter) may be at work.

Butterworth (1972), reporting on the English L2 development of Ricardo, a 13 year-old native speaker of English, discusses the non-target like use of *for* by this learner. A preliminary examination of the data relating to Ricardo's *for* utterances do not provide any justification for extending the analysis of Marta's verbless *for* utterances presented here to the *for* utterances in Ricardo's IL. Butterworth only provides a selected list of utterances and not the entire set of transcripts; however, from the available listing of the *for* utterances, there does not seem to be any evidence that these are verbless utterances. The verb is usually present but *for* follows (rather than precedes) the verb as in *I clean for clothes*, for example. In other words, the *for*

here, is, arguably, not in I position—in contrast to the analysis proposed in the case of Marta's IL.

18. Felix (1975), reporting on longitudinal data from four- to eight-year-old English-speaking children acquiring German as a second language, has observed an early verbless stage for these German L2 learners. More specifically, according to Felix, most of the early non-copula utterances produced by these subjects are of the type, S + Aux + (O), as for example, *ich kann das* (I can (do) that). In adult German, the main verb would be required in such utterances. Whether an analysis on the lines similar to that suggested for Marta can be applied to these German L2 data is a question that needs to be addressed.

19. There appear to some similarities between *for* in the verbless utterances and the preposition *ba* in the Chinese *ba*-construction. In the Chinese *ba*-construction, the NP which is interpreted as the object of the verb appears pre-verbally and is assigned Case by *ba*, which precedes it. (For various analyses of the *ba*-construction see Goodall, 1989; C-T. J. Huang, 1982; Koopman, 1984; Thompson, 1973; Travis, 1984.)

20. Suppose we do not assume that there is an underlying V. That is to say, the structure of the verbless *for* utterances is a PP small clause as in (11a). This would imply that *for* in such utterances is present solely for the purpose of assigning Case to the intended object NPs when the verb is absent. There is some evidence which suggests that this may not be a reasonable argument. The evidence consists of data from the early samples of this L2 learner's IL—data which occur at the same time as when she produces the verbless *for* utterances. The evidence concerns a construction which may be regarded as the equivalent of the double object construction in the adult grammar of English. This occurs in sample 2 in the context of the picture description task and is shown in (i).

(i)
This is the girl and the milk for the baby.

Just prior to producing the utterance in (i), Marta produces the utterance shown in (ii).

(ii)
This is the girl for the milk.

The picture which Marta is attempting to describe is a picture of a girl giving a doll a bottle. In (ii) only one of the objects is expressed whereas in (i) both objects are present. If *for* were merely a Case assigner and the verbless *for* utterances were PP small clauses, then we would expect Marta's productions of double object constructions to be as in (iii) rather than as in (i):

(iii)
This is the girl for the milk for the baby.

Instead, Marta first produces (ii) and then produces (i). The absence of constructions such as (iii) and the presence of the constructions given in (i) and (ii) suggest that there is only one *for* present and that it is probably in I position. But in the sentence shown in (i) there are two object NPs, *the baby* and *the milk*. If the NP *the baby* moves and adjoins to VP in order to get Case from *for*, there would not be any position for the other object NP to move to in order to get Case. What perhaps happens in the case of double object constructions as in (i), is that one of the NPs—in this case *the milk*—is base generated in a position conjoined to the NP *the girl*. Possibly, the conjunct *and* assigns Case to the NP *the milk* (see Schwartz, 1985 for a similar view regarding

conjuncts). Since one of the NPs is base generated in a conjoined structure, only one object NP needs to move and adjoin to VP in order to be assigned Case by *for*. However, there is a major problem with the above analysis, which relates to the theta criterion. If the NP *the milk* is base generated in conjoined position, (i.e., it is not generated as an object of the implicit V), how does it get its thematic role? At present, it is not quite clear to me how this problem can be resolved.

21. Selinker and Lakshmanan (1991) report on data from adult L2 learners of English, which indicate that adult learners also have problems in figuring out that *want* is an ECM verb. However, unlike Marta (and two other child L2 learners, Cheo and Muriel), the complementizer position is always overtly filled with *that* as in *I want that he go there*. Selinker and Lakshmanan discuss the implications of this difference between child L2 learners and adult L2 learners from the viewpoint of language transfer and fossilization.

22. See Lakshmanan (1991b) and Selinker and Lakshmanan (1991) for similar evidence concerning the acquisition of infinitival complements of *want* by two other children, Muriel, a native speaker of French, and Cheo, a native speaker of Spanish who acquired English as L2.

23. See P. Bloom (1990) for an account based on processing limitations for the omission of subjects in early L1 grammars of English.

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